

Keeping Things Honest

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Satsuki and Nonon become intoxicated and have a heart-to-heart.

Status: ongoing

Published: 2014-06-15

Updated: 2014-08-12

Words: 4519

Chapters: 2

Rated: Fiction T - Language: English - Genre: Hurt/Comfort/Friendship -
Characters: Ryuko M., Satsuki K., N. Jakuzure - Reviews: 7 - Favs: 31 -
Follows: 20

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10453469/1/Keeping-Things-Honest>

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Keeping Things Honest

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Chapter 1

Satsuki Kiryuin had never been much of a drinker. She really didn't even enjoy the taste of most alcoholic beverages. Yet, when Nonon opened the door to her apartment with a large grin and boxed red wine in hand, Satsuki had no choice but to accept her fate.

'It's getting better though,' Satsuki mused, idly swirling the red liquid in her hand as Nonon complained good naturedly about the latest date she had been on with Sanganyama. *'Although to be honest, I don't know if I'm adjusting to the taste or it's just the alcohol in my system.'*

"... I mean honestly. Who's idea of a romantic date is to go rock climbing? He's such a monkey sometimes. I don't even know why I'm dating him." Nonon paused in her tirade against Uzu and watched Satsuki swirl the wine in her paper-thin glass. "How's the wine?"

"I'm starting to enjoy it." Satsuki admitted, her tone somewhat surprised. "It took me a while to adjust to the flavour, but I'm really starting to get an appreciation for it."

"Or maybe it's because this is our second glass." Nonon grinned. "I can tell by the redness in your cheeks that it's going to your head a bit."

Satsuki suddenly noticed how much heavier her head felt and couldn't help but agree. "Well, what about you?" she asked, somewhat defensively. "I have quite a bit of height and body mass on you, so if I'm feeling the wine then you definitely are."

Nonon drained the remaining wine in her glass and laughed. "You underestimate the amount of partying that band kids do. My tolerance is much higher than yours." She said, getting up to refill her glass. "Anyways, we need some music and we both need to be less sober. Drink up, buttercup."

Satsuki snorted at the pet name but did as she was told, coughing slightly at the burn in the back of her throat. "Not classical, please." She requested.

"You're no fun." Nonon groaned, settling for her alternative playlist that she kept for the uneducated masses. "If I'm going to be listening to modern stuff, I'll need something stronger to get me in the mood. I'll be back." She called, wandering towards the back hallway. Satsuki didn't know what "something stronger" was, and wasn't sure if she wanted to know either. She examined her empty glass for a minute, using her thumb to rub off the lip print on the top of the fragile glass. Deciding that she was still entirely too functional, Satsuki got up to refill her glass again.

"Now I'm not sure if this is something you would be down to try, but I also have this." Nonon said, walking up to the table and setting down a red contraption made of glass.

Satsuki stared for a moment, her brow furrowing as she realized what it was. "That's a bong... right? I wasn't aware that you did drugs, Nonon."

Nonon chuckled. "Just marijuana, nothing stronger Satsuki-chan. I'm a music major, of course I fucking smoke weed." She said, expertly pinching off part of a nug and loading the bowl. "Do you want to try some? I'll set it all up for you so you don't choke."

Satsuki stared at the bong, weighing her options. The wine surged in her system, the lightheadedness telling her that it would be fun to try with very few consequences. Nonon grinned at the serious look on her face and took a large hit, expelling the cloud of smoke towards the open window.

"Come on, Satsuki-chan. Since when is Kiryuin Satsuki afraid of a little weed?"

That decided it for her. "Give me that bong, Nonon."

"Alright!" Nonon crowed. "Give me a second to set it up for you." She carefully lit the bowl for only a second, drawing the smoke in quickly until the chamber of the bong was only lightly filled with smoke that wouldn't be too choking for a beginner.

"Alright, it's full. Don't worry about lighting it or anything, just breathe it in nice and slow okay?" Nonon said, passing the red bong to her friend. Satsuki swallowed harshly, but did as instructed. The smoke tickled her throat going in and made her want to cough, but she resisted the urge and kept drawing in until she could hold no more. She exhaled the small cloud quickly, coughing on the end as she became aware of her burning throat and watering eyes.

"That was pretty good for a first timer." Nonon drawled, taking the bong back and pulling another huge hit. "My first time I coughed so hard I nearly threw up. Want another?" Satsuki nodded after a moment's contemplation, and Nonon made a noise of approval as she drew up another easy hit. This time Satsuki took the hit like a seasoned professional, exhaling the cloud in Nonon's face with a smirk.

"Hey now!" Nonon yelled good-naturedly, waving the smoke out of her face. "Come on, let's go back to the couch and smoke as we talk. I'm tired of standing."

They walked back to the couch and sat down, quietly passing the bong back and forth. After a few minutes of comfortable silence, Nonon began chuckling.

"What's so funny?" Satsuki said, unable to help the smile that she felt grow on her face at Nonon's laugh.

"Just... this." Nonon said vaguely, gesturing towards Satsuki. "I'm sitting on my couch, smoking bong with you. It's a very surreal situation." She laughed even harder, this time causing Satsuki to laugh with her and choke on the hit she had been taking.

"I guess this is a bit strange." Satsuki admitted after the burning in her throat subsided. "After being focused on my mother for so long, it's difficult to picture where my life will take me from here. Smoking marijuana with you... not something I would have ever anticipated."

Nonon put the bong down on the table, her face taking a more sober expression. "Now that we've both had enough, there's actually something that I've wanted to talk to you about, Satsuki."

Satsuki cocked a brow. "And we couldn't have this conversation sober because..?"

"Because it's not something that I would normally be brave enough to ask about." Nonon admitted. "Plus weed and alcohol keeps things honest. I know that you wouldn't lie to me, but I also know that you usually tend to keep some things hidden from others."

Satsuki exhaled through her nose, uncomfortable with the turn their night was taking. "Nonon..." she began.

"Just hear me out, okay? I was there in the operations room when Houka pulled up the footage of you hanging in that cage. Naked." Nonon took a deep breath, her hand nervously sweeping her hair out of her eyes. "I've been your friend since kindergarten, and there are two things that I've noticed about you over the years. One is that you never talk about your mother outside of how to defeat her, and the other is that you've always hated returning home. So... I guess when I saw you in that cage, some uncomfortable connections were made in my head."

"It was just a coincidence, Nonon." Satsuki tried to lie, but the words came out flat and false sounding.

Nonon made a small noise of amusement. "See what I mean about weed keeping things honest?" She sighed. "At any rate I had convinced myself that I was imagining things, until I talked with your sister."

Satsuki's head snapped up at that. "What does Ryuuko have to do with any of this?"

"Well, you know how Uzu had initially been chasing after her, her being his ultimate rival and all that garbage. I'll admit that it really pissed me off, and for a while there I pretty much refused to have anything to do with the transfer student even though it wasn't actually her fault. But she ended up at the same bar as me one night, and we talked it out over drinks.

"Ryuuko told me that she turned down Uzu, and that he understood she was not an option for him. She also had told him that she suspected I had feelings for him, and that he should consider asking me out." Nonon continued. "When I asked her why, she said that wasn't interested in being with another person for a while because of intimacy problems."

Satsuki's mouth went dry. *'You are jumping to conclusions, Satsuki.'* She told herself, trying to keep a neutral expression.

Nonon appraised the look on her friend's face. "She did... Satsuki." Nonon said softly. "You know what I'm talking about."

Satsuki flinched, reeling back from her friend's concern and got to her feet. She began to pace, a horrified look on her face. "When?" she breathed.

"When Ragyo forced Junketsu on her." Nonon answered softly. "She said that Ragyo implanted several memories in her head. Things like what life would have been like if she grew up as a child of Ragyo, along with..." Nonon's voice broke, and she stared at the floor for a moment while considering how best to phrase the rest of her sentence. "Along with being in bed with Ragyo and Nui."

Satsuki stood stock still, trying to process what Nonon just said. "She never told me." She whispered, more to herself than to Nonon.

"That's because she was afraid to burden you with it." Nonon said gently. "She figured that if it happened to her, it would have happened to you." Nonon got up off the couch and stood in front of Satsuki, trying to catch her eye. Satsuki stubbornly stared at the floor.

"Satsuki... look at me." Nonon whispered, reaching out to take her friend's hand. Satsuki reluctantly raised her gaze, desperately trying to retain the tears that were threatening to spill over. Nonon gave her a sad smile. "She did... didn't she? Satsuki-chan?"

"Yes." Satsuki breathed. That was all it took for her composure to slip and the dam to break. Tears began streaming down her face as she let out a long, shuddering sob.

"You can let it out." Nonon murmured, her thumb stroking the back of Satsuki's hand in what she hoped was a comforting gesture. Satsuki began to cry harder, the emotion overwhelming her after being suppressed for so long. Her legs lost their strength and she sank to her knees, still releasing an ugly torrent of emotion. Nonon allowed her to fall, kneeling beside her oldest friend and quietly being there for her. After several minutes Satsuki's sobs subsided, her breaths slowly smoothing out as she calmed down.

"We're going to get through this, Satsuki." Nonon murmured. "Together. I'll look into therapy for you, and Ryuuko. But you don't need to keep this hidden away anymore."

Satsuki raised her head and gave Nonon a watery smile. "Thank you." She whispered hoarsely, trying to convey the incredible gratitude she felt into those two simple words.

"You don't need to thank me. I'm just glad that I was able to finally be useful." Nonon chuckled. Satsuki let out a choked laugh and wiped her eyes with the heel of her palm.

"I guess Ryuuko and I have some talking to do." Satsuki said, slowly standing back up. The headrush she received reminded her that she

was still quite intoxicated. "Maybe I should borrow some marijuana from you."

Nonon snorted before doubling over with laughter. "Satsuki," she choked out, her eyes streaming. "Where do you think I got it from?"

Satsuki blinked, surprised, before Nonon's laughter became too infectious and she joined in. After the release of sorrow she just endured, laughing felt incredibly cleansing. She felt the invisible pressure easing off her shoulders until she felt light enough to fly. While she wasn't looking forwards the long process of healing ahead of her, it was comforting to her that she didn't need to endure it alone any more.

Chapter 2

Satsuki drummed her fingers on the kitchen table, anxiously awaiting her sister's return home. She eyed the green bong sitting in front of her, and the baggie of marijuana beside it. The sweet smell of the weed tickled her nose and she found herself examining the nugs closely, fascinated with the pattern the orange hairs and crystal dusting made on the plant's surface. She reluctantly placed the baggie back on the table as she heard the thud of a car door outside the house.

Nerves gripped her as she heard her sister fumbling with her keys at the door. She hoped Ryuuko would forgive her for going into her room to find the bong, Nonon having told Satsuki her secret hiding place in her closet. "*But it will be worth it.*" She told herself, breathing through her nose slowly to calm down. The front door squeaked as it swung open, and Satsuki stood up. She settled back into her old authoritative stance, putting a scowl of disapproval on her face.

"Matoi." Satsuki said, her voice heavy with high-end contempt. She heard Ryuuko pause at the door, and then her sister rounded the corner to see Satsuki standing in the kitchen.

"Matoi? What's up with that, Satsu..." Ryuuko's voice trailed off as she spied the paraphernalia on the kitchen table, and her sister's scowl. "Oh."

"'Oh' is right, Matoi. How dare you think you could keep such a secret from me?" Satsuki fought with herself to keep scowling, when inside she wanted to double over laughing at her sister's expression.

Ryuuko shifted awkwardly from one foot to the other, apparently dumbfounded. "Okay, listen. I can explain." She stuttered. Satsuki stared flatly at her, waiting for her to continue. Ryuuko coughed, and went on. "Look nee-chan. It's just something that I do once in a

while. In place of drinking. It's not a big deal." She muttered, scratching the back of her head while avoiding Satsuki's eye. "I'm sorry I hid it from you, that was stupid. Let me get rid of it, and make it up to you okay?"

Satsuki forced herself to scoff. "Make it up to me, Matoi? Do you truly mean that?"

"Of course!" Ryuuko stammered. "Anything, I swear!"

Satsuki held the bong out to her sister, keeping a straight face. Ryuuko knit her brows in confusion. "Then smoke with me, Ryuuko."

Ryuuko gaped at her, speechless for the second time in as many minutes. Satsuki couldn't hold it together anymore, and burst out laughing at her sister's expression. After a moment of processing, Ryuuko did the same.

"You asshole. You totally had me going." Ryuuko choked out, wiping a tear from her eye. "How the hell did you even find out?"

"Nonon." Satsuki replied simply, sitting down again at the table.

"That bitch." Ryuuko swore, but the grin on her face told Satsuki that she was secretly pleased. "I'm going to kill her." She said, settling down at the table across from her.

Satsuki snorted. "Don't be mad at her. This is actually a good thing." Satsuki pushed the bong and baggie towards her sister. "Make this thing work."

Ryuuko stared at the bong for a second. "This is weird." She said uncertainly, picking up the baggie and opening it. The sweet and musky smell of the marijuana filled the room.

"Maybe a little." Satsuki admitted. "But not for long."

Ryuuko met her eye with an incredulous look on her face. "I can't believe this." She muttered with a grin. "Satsuki Kiryuin, an honest-

to-god stoner. I never thought I'd see the day." Ryuuko loaded the bowl of the bong with practiced ease. "I'm assuming you've smoked with her then?" she said, offering the bong and lighter to her sister.

"Just the once." Satsuki admitted. "And I had been drinking already. Nonon set it up for me so I wouldn't choke."

Ryuuko hummed in understanding, and brought the bong to her lips. She quickly filled the chamber with light smoke. "420, smoke it." She said, covering the top of the chamber and offering it to her sister.

"420?" Satsuki inquired, taking the proffered bong and breathing in the smoke. She expelled the cloud of smoke away from her sister, eyes watering as her throat burned.

"Nevermind." Ryuuko said, taking the bong back and hitting it herself. The cloud of smoke she expelled was much larger than Satsuki's, and a thick milky white. She cocked a brow at Satsuki's impressed expression, expelling the last bit of smoke through her nose. "Practice makes perfect." She said with a grin, offering the bong back to her sister. "Come on, I'll light it for you."

Satsuki nodded, bringing the bong to her lips. Ryuuko brought the lighter to the bowl and she inhaled slowly, watching the weed glow crimson as she did so. The smoke was much harsher than before, and Satsuki coughed hard, her eyes streaming.

"Shit, sorry. This stuff is really dry and burns easy. Are you okay?" Ryuuko said, taking the bong from her before she dropped it. Satsuki indicated with her hand that she would live, still coughing too much to speak. Ryuuko got her a glass of water and Satsuki gulped at it gratefully, the cool water soothing the burn and abating the urge to cough.

Ryuuko took another hit while Satsuki collected herself. "Try swallowing if you feel like you are going to cough. It helps." She advised dryly, before drawing up another light hit and passing the bong back. Satsuki hesitated for a second, wary of coughing again.

But she took the hit anyways, this time taking Ryuuko's advice. It helped.

"My head is spinning." Satsuki said. Ryuuko chuckled, her eyes heavy and half-lidded.

"Maybe you've had enough, but my tolerance is through the roof. Why don't you pick something for us to watch while I take a few more hits to get on your level?" Ryuuko suggested.

Satsuki shifted in her seat, not looking forwards to the uncomfortable turn the night was about to take. "Well, I was kind of hoping that we could talk." She admitted.

Ryuuko paused for a second, her eyes boring into Satsuki's. Then she took a long, slow hit, exhaling silently. "Nonon." She groaned, bringing a palm to her forehead.

Satsuki was silent, evaluating her sister's reaction. "She did the right thing, Ryuuko."

Ryuuko slammed the bong on the table and got up, pacing the room. She stopped in front of kitchen window, her back turned to Satsuki. "I told her that you had enough on your plate." She said finally.

"I appreciate your concern. But you should have said something." Satsuki said gently. Ryuuko slammed her palms on the edge of the sink, her head hanging low.

"Well, what about you?" she growled.

"I'm fine." Satsuki muttered. "You worry too much about me. It's something I came to terms with a long time ago."

Ryuuko whirled around at that, and Satsuki could see the tear tracks that stained her cheeks. "Is that why you can't sleep at night? If you think I don't hear you, you're wrong."

Satsuki avoided her sister's gaze in shame. It was true; she was still plagued by night terrors most nights. "I'm sorry." She breathed. "It was not my intention for you to hear that."

Ryuuko wiped her face with the heel of her palm, and plopped herself back into the chair across from Satsuki. The silence between them stretched to an uncomfortable length, before Ryuuko finally spoke. "Tell me about it."

Satsuki drummed her fingertips on the tabletop, reluctant to meet her sister's eye. "What would you like to know?" she said finally.

"How often?" Ryuuko prompted gently.

"Often." Satsuki breathed, closing her eyes as she exhaled through her nose. "It started when I was five. It got better when I moved to my middle school dorm, but it would still happen every time I was home."

Ryuuko stirred in her seat, not trusting herself to speak. Satsuki took her silence as a prompt to continue.

"Only Soroi knew. He accompanied me on my trips back and forth from home. My nightmares had begun occurring on an almost nightly basis, enough that the lack of sleep was causing me to slip in my studies. That was when he began making me tea during the day, and tutoring me at night. The caffeine kept me awake in class, and his studies would exhaust me enough to stave the night terrors away enough to get a few hours of sleep." She took a deep shuddering breath, and continued in a flat tone.

"The day I donned Junketsu in front of her was the day that things began to escalate. She began openly fondling me in front of Hououmaru, and Nui. I suspect she took it as a sign of my acceptance of life fibres, and an invitation to truly make me her own."

The horrible lifeless tone that Satsuki's voice had taken was enough for Ryuuko to begin tearing up again. A heavy stone of guilt formed

in the pit of her stomach. Satsuki kept speaking, the words pouring out of her before she could stop. If she hadn't been under the influence, she might have chosen her next words with more care.

"Fighting you in Junketsu began to take its toll on me. I was in a constant state of exhaustion, and by Osaka it was nothing but sheer willpower that kept me upright. After our fight I collapsed in my helicopter, and Nui revealed herself to be the pilot. I was in no state to fight her, and had no choice but to allow her to fly me to my mother's manor. There, I was ordered to meet my mother in the bath. That was the first time she brought me to orgasm." Satsuki's voice faltered at that, but she continued in a whisper. "She stole many more from me while I hung in that cage, among other things."

Ryuuko got up suddenly and stalked over to her room, slamming the door behind her. Satsuki sat in silence, uncertain whether to follow her or give her space. She decided on the former when a loud crashing and a scream sounded from behind the closed door.

"Ryuuko? I'm coming in." Satsuki said, rapping lightly at the wooden door with her knuckle. She took Ryuuko's lack of response as an invitation, and opened the door. Ryuuko was on her knees in the middle of the floor, surrounded by the items from her dresser that had been flung onto the floor. Her back was facing away from her, but Satsuki could tell from the shudders that wracked the girl's frame that she was crying.

Satsuki picked her way carefully to where Ryuuko was, and knelt beside her sister. Ryuuko allowed herself to be pulled into Satsuki's embrace.

"It's not your fault, Ryuuko." Satsuki murmured. Ryuuko let out a harsh sob, trying to suppress it with a squeak.

"It... is. If I hadn't fought you..."

Satsuki shifted until she was facing Ryuuko, and tipped the girl's face up by the chin until Ryuuko was forced to meet Satsuki's eyes.

"It is not your fault." She repeated, her tone more insistent. "The only person to blame is Ragyo, and she is dead now. You believed that I killed your father. Choosing to fight me for it is something that you should never be ashamed of."

Ryuuko jerked her chin away. "I should have tried harder to get information from you. We should have been allies long before Osaka."

"Ryuuko, you know that wouldn't have happened. You were begging me for information from the first time we met. Like I told you on the Nudist Beach ship, I intended to lead you into the fight without ever telling you the truth about my... our mother." Satsuki said. "If fault lies with anyone other than Ragyo, it lies with me for not trusting you sooner."

"Don't say that. Don't ever say that." Ryuuko growled suddenly. "Don't you dare blame yourself."

"I need to be realistic."

"You need!.." Ryuuko stopped when she realized that she was shouting. She exhaled slowly through her nose, her hair slowly drifting back down to its normal height. "You need to stop trying to handle everything on your own. You have me. You have Soroi. You have Mako, and your Devas, and everyone else that cares for you. You can lean on us every once in a while."

Satsuki shifted to a more comfortable position on the hard floor. "The point of tonight was for me to chastise you, not the other way around." She grumbled.

"Well maybe if you weren't so secretive, I wouldn't have to chastise you." Ryuuko grumbled back, but with a small smile on her face. Satsuki snorted, and used her thumb to wipe the tear tracks from under her sister's eyes. Ryuuko fussed, not used to displays of affection like that from her sister.

"I don't want to ever see you crying over me like that again, you hear me?" Satsuki said, giving Ryuuko's shoulder a small shake. "Nonon is looking into a therapist, for both of us. I'm done with keeping secrets, from you or otherwise."

Ryuuko sat still, processing. "Well, I agree that therapy might be a good idea for us. But what's confusing me is why we had to be high just to talk."

"Nonon told me that weed keeps things honest." Satsuki sighed, scratching the back of her head. "I can't help but agree; it certainly makes talking easier. But..." her voice trailed off, and a slight blush touched her cheeks.

"But?" Ryuuko prompted.

"Okay. Maybe I like how marijuana feels." Satsuki admitted, embarrassed. "It's more pleasant than alcohol, with no apparent hangover or nutritional value. And I thought it would be fun to smoke with you."

Ryuuko threw her head back and laughed.

"What?" Satsuki snapped, slightly defensively.

"You know, I've smoked a lot. Mostly on my own, but sometimes with Mako and even once with Nonon. But the one person who I've always wanted to smoke with was... you." Ryuuko chuckled, wiping the tear on her cheek with the palm of her hand. "So tonight when I thought you busted me, I didn't care about the loss of my weed or my bong. It was the thought that we would never share a bong that bothered me the most." She said, slowly standing with a huff. She turned to gaze at Satsuki, still sitting on her bedroom floor. "But I would be lying if I said that I pictured our first session to be like this."

Satsuki smiled, and rose to her feet as well. "Well," she said, smoothing her shirt and brushing a loose hair off her jeans, "the night is still young. So if you want to smoke some more, eat some

Cheetos, watch some anime, and do other stereotypical stoner things; I'd be down."

Ryuuko laughed, taking her sister's hand and pulling her back to the kitchen. "Maybe we can make a gravity bong!"

"I don't know what that is!" Satsuki yelped, but allowed herself to be pulled forwards.

"Oh, there is so much that I have to teach you!"

Satsuki silently wondered if this was such a good idea after all.